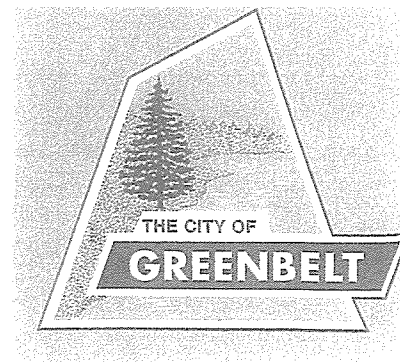


# CITY OF GREENBELT

25 CRESCENT ROAD, GREENBELT, MD. 20770-1886



September 18, 2015

The Honorable Dereck E. Davis, Chair  
House Economic Matters Committee  
House Office Building, Room 231  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**CITY COUNCIL**  
Emmett V. Jordan, Mayor  
Judith F. Davis, Mayor Pro Tem  
Konrad E. Herling  
Leta M. Mach  
Silke I. Pope  
Edward V.J. Putens  
Rodney M. Roberts

Dear Chair Davis & Members of the Committee:

Pepco, the City's electric utility, has proposed significant "vegetation management" work in the City of Greenbelt as part of its Reliability Enhancement Program. This proposed work could result in the removal of approximately 375 trees along City streets and on City open space and parkland. In addition, Pepco plans to remove more than 150 other trees on private property and conduct a large amount of pruning work. Past pruning activities by Pepco and their contractors have resulted in disfigured trees.

It takes decades for a tree to mature. Pepco will replace large mature street trees with small (2 to 2.5 inch caliper) specimens. Pepco has refused reasonable requests from the City to: grind stumps after tree removal, water newly planted replacement trees, give a longer notice period (currently 7 days) to homeowners who are affected, and provide comprehensive maps of the project illustrating the impact City-wide.

Since this project was first proposed, Pepco has been contacting individual homeowners to secure permission to remove trees on their property. Some of these homeowners report "intimidation" tactics including warnings that homeowners will be liable if the tree falls on a power line. Homeowners have not been advised they can deny permission for tree removal and only allow Pepco to trim trees. In fact, Pepco's door hanger (attached) notice makes no mention of this denial option.

Electric reliability is important, but it must be balanced against the value and benefit of our urban tree canopies which are an essential element to the health and livability of our communities. Trees provide aesthetic and environmental benefits. Greenbelt is a historic planned community and part of the original plan was the preservation of trees and forests. In fact, the name Greenbelt refers to the belt of "green, undeveloped, forested land" that surrounded the original Town.

**A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK**

(301) 474-8000 FAX: (301) 441-8248

[www.greenbeltmd.gov](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov)



In 2013, the General Assembly passed legislation (HB 587) prohibiting local governments from adopting or enforcing a law, rule or regulation that interferes with an electric company's Vegetation Management program. The City urges the General Assembly to repeal this legislation. Local governments deserve a voice regarding the appearance and maintenance of the trees in our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Emmett V. Jordan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Emmett" being more prominent.

Emmett V. Jordan  
Mayor

cc: City Council  
22<sup>nd</sup> District Delegation  
Delegate James J. Tarlau  
Maryland Public Service Commission  
Prince George's County Government  
Montgomery County Government  
Maryland Municipal League  
Prince George's County Municipal Association  
Town of Berwyn Heights  
City of Bowie  
City of College Park  
City of Hyattsville  
City of Takoma Park  
City of New Carrollton

## How Does Pepco Decide What Needs to be Done?

Pepco's Vegetation Management program is an ongoing endeavor that occurs in your neighborhood approximately every 2-4 years. It is important proactive work that reduces the likelihood to experience a power outage when a storm does occur. We organize our workload by feeder or circuit, which are the wires that bring the power to your neighborhood and home. Certified Arborists perform a pole span by pole span evaluation of trees and vegetation in order to create a work plan for tree crews. They look for trees and vines that will eventually develop a conflict with the electric facilities. They also look for dead, dying, hazardous trees and tree conditions prone to causing power outages.

## What Standards Does Pepco and their Contractors Adhere to?

Pepco contractors are required to adhere to tree care standards established by American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A-300. Our prescriptions are based on Best Management Practices (BMP's) established by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). State or District laws requiring minimum clearances from electrical conductors, may also impact how trees are pruned or if they should be removed. Utility vegetation management Arborists are required to abide by Safety Standards set in ANSI Z133 and are regulated by OSHA.

## Who Oversees the Work?

Pepco has a large staff of trained Foresters and Certified Arborists who oversee the work of our contractors. Our contractors are Licensed Tree Experts; their work is subject to inspections by Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the District of Columbia's Urban Forestry Administration (UFA). Maryland and District of Columbia's Public Service Commission (PSC) set regulations to ensure that Pepco properly maintains vegetation away from electric wires.

## How Will My Tree Look After it is Pruned?

Tree species, its position in relation to our electric facilities, and the line voltage are all factors in determining how much limb removal is required and the shape the tree takes. If a tree is going to be maintained in the vicinity of electric wires, Arborists use a method called directional pruning to steer tree growth away from wires. Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate typical shapes a tree may assume after directional pruning.

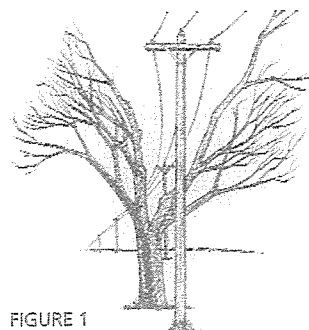


FIGURE 1

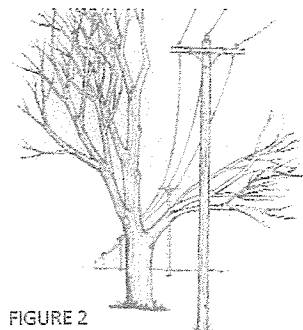


FIGURE 2

## What About Tree Removal?

Our work planners may suggest the entire cut down of a tree if a large percentage of a crown needs to be pruned, if the tree has no space to grow, or if the tree has no acceptable branches to directionally prune back to. These are trees that would be left unhealthy and unsightly if we were to "just prune" them.

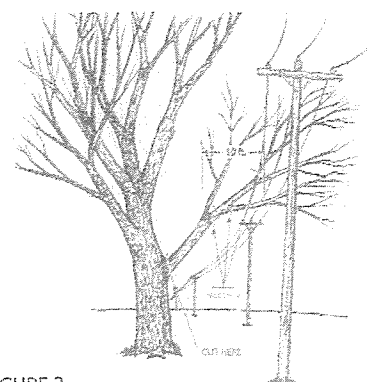


FIGURE 3

Figures courtesy of the International Society of Arboriculture.

Removal might also be required where a tree is near our primary wires and it is dying or leaning toward them, or if it is a fast-growing/weak-wooded tree such as a Sycamore, Silver Maple, Willow, Poplar, or Pine. If a tree needs to be removed, we encourage replacement trees to be low-growing species if planted back in the same place (see Right Tree, Right Place section).

## What is Tree Line USA?



Tree Line USA® is a program of the National Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters that recognizes utilities that demonstrate best practices in utility arboriculture. Utilities that are

recognized with this honor must have a program that ensures proper tree pruning, employee training, tree planting, public education, and a tree based energy conservation program. Pepco has received this designation every year since 2001.



Tall Trees

Medium Trees

Small Trees

## Right Tree, Right Place

### YOU CAN PREVENT FUTURE TREE-ELECTRIC LINE PROBLEMS

Trees help make our environment beautiful. They brighten our neighborhoods and lend shade to our sidewalks and homes. But when a tree that will grow either too large or too tall, is planted under or near electrical power lines, that beautiful tree can cause power outages, property damage, or even injury to people or animals.

The National Arbor Day Foundation advocates a policy of "right tree, right place," under which all trees are planted where they can thrive and will not interfere with essential public infrastructure such as electric power lines. Pepco advocates this policy as well and has been certified as a Tree Line USA Utility since 2001. Please see the National Arbor Day Foundation for more information on the Tree Line USA program. Here's a helpful guide to the right tree, right place approach.

**Tall Trees** Tall trees such as Maple, Sycamore, Oak, Spruce, Pine and Birch should be planted well away from wires – more than 50 feet to the side.

**Medium Trees** Medium trees that grow to a height of 40 feet or less, such as Honey locust, Serviceberry or Hornbeam, should be planted at least 20 feet from power lines.

**Small Trees** Small trees that grow slowly and to no more than 25 feet in height, such as Dogwood, flowering Cherry, Crabapple, purple leaf Plum and Japanese Maple are recommended for areas close to power lines.

### QUESTIONS?

For answers to your questions about tree maintenance or to get a copy of Pepco's brochure, "Trees and Electrical Service," call 202-833-7500 or visit [pepco.com](http://pepco.com) and click on "brochures." Our Web site also includes informative videos that demonstrate actual tree maintenance operations.

## Tree Maintenance Crews Are Coming to Your Neighborhood

**WHY?** Pepco is committed to providing our customers with safe and reliable electricity. Keeping branches and trees away from wires helps to keep your lights on and your family safe. An effective tree maintenance program is critical to Pepco's successful delivery of your electric service. Pepco prunes and removes trees that will grow into or interfere with electric wires and other equipment. There is no charge for these services, and Pepco removes all the debris up to 6 inches in diameter from routine scheduled tree maintenance.

### WHAT? Type(s) of Work Required:

- ☐ Routine scheduled pruning
- ☐ Clear tree for customer's tree removal
- ☐ Complete tree removal
- ☐ Prune service drop
- ☐ Pruning for Wire improvements or upgrades
- ☐ No work required – Reported problem does not involve Pepco equipment
- ☐ No Work required- Reported problem involves cable/phone facilities
- ☐ Reported problem can wait for future routine maintenance
- ☐ Herbicide application
- ☐ This visit was in response to your inspection request
- ☐ An URGENT condition exists! Please call the person below as soon as possible!

Additional Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

CALL: \_\_\_\_\_

**WHEN?** Routine tree maintenance is scheduled to begin in your neighborhood starting:

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

### ATTENTION, CUSTOMERS!

This brochure serves as notice of pending utility vegetation management services on your property and in your area. If you have questions about the scheduled work, please call the person noted above within seven days. Unless we hear from you, we will proceed with our planned tree work so we can complete our utility vegetation management services in an efficient, cost-effective manner.